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THE BOARD OF PUBLIC WORKS.

By Franklin T. Howe.

Read before the Society, April 3, 1899.

A quarter of a century has very nearly elapsed since the territorial form of government went out of existence. In fact, the anniversary of its death will be June 30. There are young men to-day who know nothing of that territorial form of government. There are others, older, who remember it simply because of the odium that attached to the final adjournment of the Legislature, which was called the "Feather-Duster" Legislature, and of the Board of Public Works, upon which was placed the responsibility for all the difficulties occasioned by the improvements that were started by that organization and which resulted in an investigation that legislated out of existence that particular form of government.

The Act which brought into being a territorial form of government for the District of Columbia was the result of an agitation which had gone on in this District for a couple of years and which was primarily instigated by a committee of one hundred citizens of the District who had become tired of the hybrid form of government that had existed here for a great number of years. The government of the District at that time consisted of two municipalities—that of Washington and that of Georgetown—and a Levy Court, which controlled that portion of the District outside of the two cities of Washington and Georgetown, and known then as the county of Washington. Along in 1869 and 1870 the citizens of the District became interested in the

formation of a government which should combine the duties of these three distinct corporations and which should bring the entire District of Columbia into one governmental power. Meetings were held and discussions were had as to what form of government was best for the District, and a bill was introduced in the Senate by Mr. Hamlin, of Maine, providing for a territorial form of government. That measure failed of action, and the following winter, in 1870-'71, Mr. Hamlin's bill was re-introduced, passed the Senate and was referred to the House, naturally going to the District committee, of which Mr. Cook, of Illinois, was then chairman, and was there considered. As a result, the bill was reported by Mr. Cook on January 20, 1871, and was passed by the House on the same day. That bill provided for a territorial form of government for the District of Columbia, the first, second and third sections providing for a governor, and his duties; section four, providing for a secretary of the territory, and his duties; section five, providing for a legislative assembly, consisting of a council of eleven members, to be appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate, five for one year and six for two years, and the subsequent appointees to be appointed for two years, and also for a house of delegates, of twenty-two members, to be elected for one year by the voters of the District of Columbia. Sections six and seven indicated the qualifications of voters; section eight provided for the members of the legislature and their duties; sections nine to eighteen gave the powers of the legislative assembly; sections nineteen to twenty-one referred to the taxation of property; section twenty-two applied particularly to the public schools; sections twenty-three to twenty-nine referred to the courts and judicial officers; sections thirty to thirty-four referred to the salaries of

the governor, secretary, members of the legislature, and made provision for the election of the members of the house of delegates and a delegate to Congress; section thirty-five provided for the assessment of United States property every two years; section thirty-six related to appropriations of money by the United States; sections thirty-seven and thirty-eight referred to the Board of Public Works and its duties; section thirty-nine to fraudulent voters, and section forty repealed the charters of Washington, Georgetown and the Levy Court.

Mr. Cook, chairman of the District of Columbia committee in the House of Representatives, in reporting the bill, said that it had been drawn after a careful examination of the facts and an ascertainment of the wishes of the people of the District of Columbia, who had, up to this time, been subjected to about the worst form of government in the United States. Mr. Wood, also of the District of Columbia committee, said that "for the past fifty years we have had a contradictory, heterogeneous and unsatisfactory form of government in the District of Columbia, and the result had been that property had not been protected and that the capital of this great nation had not been properly provided for."

This territorial bill was laid before the Senate, January 24 and sent to conference with the following committee: Senators Patterson, Hamlin and Thurman, and Representatives Cook, Bingham and Voorhees. The bill was considered in conference and with slight amendments was finally passed by both Houses and approved by President Grant, February 21, 1871.

At the time of the approval of this bill the citizens of Washington were indulging in a carnival as the result of the paving of Pennsylvania avenue from First street west to Seventeenth street with a wood pave-

ment, the carnival lasting for two days, the 20th and 21st of February. This was the first attempt in the District of placing any patent pavement upon a thoroughfare here, and the paving had been done under the auspices of a commission appointed for that purpose. On February 27 President Grant appointed Henry D. Cooke as governor of the District of Columbia under the new bill, and on March 2 he nominated N. P. Chipman secretary of the new territory. On that day, also, he nominated the following gentlemen to comprise the Board of Public Works: S. P. Brown, A. B. Mullett, Alexander Shepherd and James A. Magruder.

There were some people in the District who objected to the new form of government, and the Mayor of Washington, at that time Mr. Matthew G. Emery, in the belief that the corporation existed in all its powers until June 1, continued to give out contracts for work for the improvement of the District, so that on March 25, a bill for injunction against the Mayor was filed to prevent carrying out contracts for paving several streets in the District, given out by him on March 14. The governor at once opened an office in the building still standing at the northwest corner of Seventeenth street and Pennsylvania avenue, and on March 17 he was formally recognized and considered the head of the District of Columbia, although it was provided in the bill that the new government should not go fully into effect until June 1. In the territorial bill, as has already been intimated, there was a provision for a delegate in Congress, and Mr. N. P. Chipman, the secretary of the District, was nominated by the Republicans for that office March 29. His opponent, nominated by the Democrats, was Mr. Richard T. Merrick. In the territorial bill, as has been stated, there was a provision for the legislature, to consist of a council and

house of delegates. The council was nominated by the President April 13, 1871. The legislature met on May 13, following, and a report was submitted by the Board of Public Works, under date of May 13, setting forth its plan of improvements. This Board of Public Works derived all, or nearly all, of its power from the thirty-seventh section of the Act of February 21, 1871, and under the provisions of this section the Board took complete supervision of, and control over, all the streets, avenues, alleys, sewers, roads and bridges in the District. In the plan submitted to the legislature at that time the Board stated as follows:

“The statement, it will be seen, contemplates public improvements in every portion of the District of Columbia and comprises almost every street and avenue in the cities of Washington and Georgetown, as well as all the roads in the county. It provides for the improvement of the streets in the central portion of Washington by lessening the width of the carriage-ways and paving and sewerage of them, and also embraces the building of a main sewer from Eighth street northwest to Rock Creek; the sewerage of the Valley of the Tiber and the paving and macadamizing of a large number of streets in the less thickly populated sections of the city. It is estimated that \$4,358,598 will be the proportion of the expense to be borne by the treasury of the District in making these improvements, and as, in the opinion of the Board, that amount will be sufficient to complete them, the necessity of annual appropriations, so far as the prosecution of these works is concerned, will be obviated by the passage of the bill herein respectfully recommended. Were it required that this seemingly large amount should be paid within a single year, grave apprehension might justly arise as to the ability of the people to meet so

heavy a burden. It is, however, proposed in the bill that the money shall be raised by a loan extending over a period of thirty years; and it will be found to contain careful provision both for the payment of the interest and the extinguishment of the debt. It is believed by the Board that should the bill become a law and proper measures be taken to protect our credit there will be no difficulty in disposing at a satisfactory rate of the bonds which it is proposed to issue."

In this plan, which covered improvements of every kind, grading, paving, sewerage, parking and the general improvement of streets throughout the entire District and also in the county, the Board of Public Works expressed its belief that the total amount asked for, which was something over \$6,000,000, one-third of which was to be raised by the assessment upon property benefited by these improvements would be sufficient.

With this plan in view, and to enable the Board to carry out its project, the \$4,000,000 loan was passed by the legislature on the 10th of July, 1871.

The Board was, however, not permitted to go on with its work without opposition on the part of certain citizens, and seventeen of them, including some of the largest property-holders, filed a bill of injunction to restrain the Board from its work, and to prevent the issue of the bonds provided for by the legislature. In order to ascertain if the citizens of the District, or a majority thereof, were in favor of the proposed plan of improvement by the Board of Public Works, the \$4,000,000 loan was submitted to a vote of the people of the District, with the result that it was sustained with almost practical unanimity. In the meantime the Board of Public Works had commenced its operations, the commissions having charge of certain improvements proposed before the passage of the territorial bill having

turned over to it their books and papers, and in August following it advertised for proposals for every class of work of improvement to be submitted by the 1st of September. In order to guard against any criticism that might be made, the Board provided for a committee of consulting engineers as an advisory board, and this was composed of Maj. Gen. A. A. Humphreys, Chief of Engineers, U. S. A.; Gen. O. E. Babcock, Commissioner of Public Buildings and Grounds; Gen. M. C. Meigs, Quartermaster General, U. S. A.; Gen. J. K. Barnes, Surgeon General, U. S. A., and Frederick Law Olmstead, Chief Engineer of the Improvement of Central Park, New York. To these gentlemen were submitted the plans for improvement in the District as had been formulated by the Board, and these plans received their approval, or at least the approval of a majority of this advisory board. When the Board was organized the Governor of the District was, *ex officio*, a member and he was made President; Mr. Alexander R. Shepherd, Vice President; Mr. S. P. Brown, Secretary; Mr. James A. Magruder, Treasurer, and Mr. A. B. Mullett, who was at that time the Supervising Architect of the Treasury, was made Chief Engineer. Mr. Mullett in October following found that his duties in the Treasury Department would not allow him to perform those of Chief Engineer, and he resigned from that position and Gen. Geo. S. Greene, who has but recently died, and who was the father of Gen. F. V. Greene, afterward an Assistant Engineer under the present form of government, and who also served with distinction in Manila during the war with Spain, was appointed Chief Engineer. Gen. Greene was a civil engineer of reputation and to him is attributable the plan of sewerage adopted for this District. As has been stated, bids for the work of improvement

in this District covering every class and form, including grading, paving, setting of curbs, and laying of sidewalks, sewerage, both for trunk and pipe sewers, were submitted on the 1st of September, 1871. The offices of the Board of Public Works had been removed from the northwest corner of Seventeenth street and Pennsylvania avenue to the Morrison Building on Four-and-a-half street, between Pennsylvania avenue and C street, and there they remained during the entire existence of the Board. When these bids were submitted, the Board took them in charge and made inquiries from the dealers in the material that would be required in the prosecution of the work and decided, after careful deliberation and an examination of all the proposals, that money could be saved to the District by establishing a fixed rate for each class of work and by furnishing the material to the contractors, and so later they held a consultation with the principal bidders and decided to fix certain prices for work, to be known as "Board Rates." It was claimed that by this method it would be known exactly what price they would have to pay for the different classes of work and that contracts could be given only to those who were known to be thoroughly responsible and capable of doing the work called for in their contracts. Whether this was right or not, the practice obtained during the entire life of the Board. Material was purchased at first hands from manufacturers and dealers in that material and it was furnished to the contractors at the rates paid by the Board.

The work done by the Board of Public Works during its existence up to June 20, 1874, when it was legislated out of office, forms the basis of the present beautiful city of Washington. It found the capital of the United States comparatively a village hamlet. It

sought to make it a city worthy of the nation that it represented. When the Board of Public Works took control of the streets and avenues of this District the condition in which they found affairs was anything but attractive. Few streets were paved and those that were had either cobble or blue stone pavements, the only patent pavement being on Pennsylvania avenue from the Capitol to 17th street. In the attempted improvements heretofore made, little care had been given as to the grades of the streets, and there was no uniform system at all. This was one of the difficulties that confronted the Board at the very outset of its work. A uniform system of grades was adopted, which involved very deep cuts on some streets and considerable filling up upon others, and it was not until the grades had been established by the Engineer-in-Chief and his assistants that any of the work was done. When work was commenced by the different contractors, it was begun in almost every section of the city at once, and as a consequence nearly every street was torn up to a greater or lesser extent. This did not make the city present an attractive appearance during the progress of the work of improvement, but when the work was completed, the sewer and gas mains laid, the streets improved by a patent pavement of either wood or concrete, the brick sidewalks laid, and the parks nicely sodded and with the trees set out, there were few residents who did not rejoice that the improvements had been made.

The life of the Board of Public Works was about three years, and during that time it performed the following work: Curb set, linear feet, 817,885; brick sidewalks laid, square yards, 1,176,453; concrete sidewalks laid, square yards, 22,235; flag sidewalks laid, square feet, 185,429; roadway, gravel, square yards, 103,640;

roadway, cobble, square yards, 186,122; roadway, bluestone, square yards, 73,140; roadway, macadam, square yards, 148,926; roadway, Belgian and granite, square yards, 177,698; roadway, concrete, square yards, 532,032; roadway, wood, square yards, 1,005,231; or in miles, assuming sidewalks at ten feet in width and roadways thirty-two feet in width, including the county: Curbstone set, in miles, 154.09; brick sidewalks laid, 200.05; flag sidewalks, 3.05; concrete sidewalks, 3.79; gravel roadway, in the county, 39; cobble pavement, 9.95; bluestone pavement, 3.89; macadam pavement, city and county, 7.87; Belgian and granite pavement, 9.46; concrete pavement, 28.34; wood pavement, 53.55; total sidewalk in miles, 207.79; total roadway in city, 118.56; total improved roadway in the county, 39. Besides this there was done of grading about 3,340,000 cubic yards. In sewers there was performed the following work: Slash-run sewer, ten-foot span at outlet, 2,200 lineal feet; B-street intersecting sewer, twelve feet at outlet, 5,312 lineal feet; Tiber Creek, main stem, twenty feet at outlet, 1,000 feet; Tiber Creek, main stem, thirty feet at outlet, 2,473 lineal feet; Tiber Creek, eastern stem, nine feet diameter, 2,350 feet; Tiber Creek, northwestern stem, nine feet diameter, 5,340 feet. Of the Boundary-street intercepting sewers, there was completed of ten feet diameter, 300 feet; nine feet nine inches diameter, 1,200 feet; six feet nine inches diameter, 900 feet, and in addition to the above named main stems the following secondary brick sewers were laid: Seven feet six inches inside diameter, 205 feet; six feet six inches inside diameter, 985 feet; six feet inside diameter, 3,818 feet; five feet six inches inside diameter, 4,370 feet; five feet six inches inside diameter, 4,730 feet; five feet inside diameter, 480 feet; four feet inside diameter,

9,765 feet; four feet four inches inside diameter, 970 feet; three feet inside diameter, 7,759 feet; three feet six inches inside diameter, 3,150 feet. There were also laid of pipe sewers of glazed earthenware, mostly of twelve and fifteen inches in diameter of bore, 317,196 lineal feet, and also an almost equal amount of six-inch house connections.

In the prosecution of its work of improvement, the Board of Public Works naturally caused a good deal of injury to many property-holders. It was not pleasant for a man who owned a house to find his street cut all the way from five to twenty feet down, and his dwelling left up in the air, as it were. On the other hand, the man who owned a house upon a street which was filled for several feet found himself way below the grade, so that possibly he could have stepped from his second-story window to the pavement. These hardships, however, could not be avoided, for the Board considered the general good and not the effect its work would have upon individual property-holders. It was noticeable, however, that but few of the small real estate owners were among those who became opponents to the march of improvement. Those who were the most active in opposition to the Board and its work were men of wealth who could well afford to pay the special taxes assessed against their property because of the increased value that the improvements gave it.

In the financial crisis of 1873, the Board suffered, as did all industries and corporations throughout the country. The money market became exceedingly tight and it was difficult to raise funds even upon the best of securities. The District suffered because it could not dispose of its bonds or certificates and the employees could not be paid. The Board of Public Works became indebted to its contractors and was unable to

pay them except with auditor's certificates showing the amount of money due, and many of the contractors were compelled to dispose of the certificates at great discount. The Board also was unable to pay its debts to its employees and many of them who had not money laid aside or who could not obtain extended credit were obliged to have recourse to money lenders and to pay exorbitant rates of interest to obtain money with which to provide themselves with the necessities of life.

Notwithstanding this condition of things, and the fact that the employees were not paid, there was never a more loyal set of clerks than those who served under the Board of Public Works. During the long investigation, of which I have already spoken, there were times when portions of the force worked night and day to furnish the information asked for by Congress, and they all worked willingly and without a murmur. I have been called from my bed at night by the Governor, who told me that certain information would be required on the following morning, and that it was necessary to be obtained from the records. I have gone in his carriage to the houses of other clerks, got them out of bed, gone with them down to the office and worked until daylight making transcripts of the papers that were called for. No one ever murmured, or thought that this extra work was a hardship. The men were all loyal to the Governor, and to Mr. Willard, who succeeded him as Vice-President of the Board, and they counted no labor too severe if it enabled the Governor to present the facts to the investigating committee.

All the work of improvements enumerated above, if must be remembered, was accomplished within the space of three years, and in the face of opposition from a number of people of the District. Not only was

the Board hampered by injunctions sought to be obtained in court, but it was also handicapped by investigations by Congress at every session held during its existence. There was an investigation during the very first session of Congress after the Board had gone into power, which lasted the entire session of that Congress. There was another investigation in 1872 and finally an investigation in 1874 which lasted for four months and was prosecuted with as much industry and bitterness as ever characterized a Congressional inquiry. In these investigations charges were made, not only affecting the legality of the actions of the Board in its award of contracts and in its prosecution of the work under these contracts, but also casting suspicion upon the personal integrity of the Board as a whole and upon its individual members. All the committees of Congress, with the exception of the joint committee of 1874, upheld the action of the Board and its individual members, and commended the work that was being prosecuted. The inquiry of 1874 finally resulted in a report, signed by Messrs. Allison, Thurman and Stewart on behalf of the Senate, and Messrs. Wilson, Hubbell, Bass, Jewett and Hamilton on the part of the House, recommending the change of the form of government of this District into practically what it is now. In that report there was nothing that reflected upon the personal integrity of any member of the Board of Public Works. It criticised the attempt of the Board to perform in a few years work that should have been extended over a long period of time, and it believed that contracts were made beyond the time contemplated in the appropriation by the legislature and in advance of such appropriation for specific work.

When the territorial form of government was adopted it was a source of gratification to a large number

of people in the District that the obligation of the United States to pay a share of the improvements rendered necessary in the development and beautification of the National Capital was recognized. This was recognized in section 36 of the act, which reads as follows:

"Section 36. There shall be appropriated each year out of the Treasury of the United States the same percentage upon the assessed value of the property of the United States within the District of Columbia as other property-holders therein are taxed, on their real and personal property; the money thus appropriated by the United States to be applied exclusively in the manner specified in the acts making such appropriations."

Before that, in a table shown by the first report of the Board of Public Works, it was demonstrated that during the life of the Capital of the United States in this District, the United States had appropriated only about ten per cent. of the money expended in the improvements here, while the District itself had expended the other ninety per cent. It was believed that, according to the law which designated this District as the seat of the National Capital, the national government had an equal share in the expenses of the Government and improvement of the District. It had been recreant in its duty in the matter of appropriations and its full obligation to the District was never recognized until the establishment of the present form of government under the act providing for which, the United States appropriates an amount equal to the revenues of the District. It was claimed by the Board of Public Works that in its improvements it was obliged to carry on the work in the streets and avenues owned by the National Government, and that if the United States should appropriate its portion due for these improve-

ments there would be a surplus to the credit of the Board. This was an argument made by the Governor in his answer to the questions propounded by the investigating committee of 1874.

When the territorial form of government came into power the debt of the corporations of Washington, Georgetown and the Levy Court or county was as follows: Washington, \$4,096,801.01; Georgetown, \$521,689; Levy Court, \$1,699.90; total, \$4,350,189.91. There was at that time money due to employees of the different corporations, to the school teachers and to others. The debt of the District for its operations, including money due to employees and officials, to contractors, and others doing work under the District, at the time of the investigation in 1874, was stated by the committee in its report to be \$18,872,565.76. Quite an amount of this sum was claimed to be due from the United States to the District for work done about the property of the General Government, and it was contended that with this amount deducted the indebtedness of the District would not have been greatly in excess of the estimated cost of improvements suggested to the legislature when the plan was first submitted. The Board of Public Works derived its power, as has been stated, under the 37th section of the Organic Act, creating the territorial government, and it was not a subordinate agency to the municipal body corporate, but was a co-ordinate body, to which was given entire control of the streets, avenues, alleys and sewers of the District. The claim of the Board in that respect repeatedly received the sanction of the Supreme Court of the District of Columbia, which is a court of the United States. From its duties and from the fact that to the Board of Public Works was committed the prosecution and care of the improvements of the National Capital, this Board be-

came practically the government of the District. In its extensive operations it dwarfed and dominated the other branches of the local government and was more widely known than either of its co-ordinate bodies. It was the branch of the District government against which was leveled every bit of the opposition in this District to the march of improvement and upon which was placed every charge by the critics of its work in the country at large. Its powers were beyond control, its work was of a magnitude never before attempted by any similar body in so short a space of time. Its duty, according to the answer of the Governor to the questions propounded by the committee of investigation in 1874, and also in accordance with the plea of the counsel for the District in that investigation, was to carry out the plan that was originally marked out for the National Capital. As one of the counsel said in his argument before the committee:

“Until 1870 the Capital of the nation was a disgrace to the American people. Selected as the permanent seat of the Federal Government, named in honor of him who was its first President, received from the people of the adjoining States by donation upon the consideration that it should be cared for by the country, the American Congresses that have assembled here have permitted its magnificent promises to be unfulfilled, its broad avenues and beautiful streets to remain unimproved, its natural sewer courses to become mere mudholes, and permitted in the heart of the city, within a stone’s throw of its principal avenue, a cesspool, breathing forth disease and death. The citizens of the country, visiting the Capital, found therein no pride and paid no attention, while the foreigner wondered that some of the energy of the American character was not spent in the furtherance of the grand plan of the

city which was conceived by the fathers and whose beautification and adornment was their hopeful pride. The nation has neglected its own city. The people of this country were never unwilling to bear a proper share of taxation in order to make the Capital worthy of the Republic. But at length a new era dawned upon the Capital. The fossils of the past age were compelled to give way to the ideas of the new era, and men were found whose hands were strong enough, whose courage was great enough, whose faith was unbounded enough to begin the great work of the restoration of the city to its proper position, and commenced the execution of the original plan that had lain so long unknown and unheeded."

Perhaps the work that was of the most positive benefit to the District, performed by the Board of Public Works, was the elimination of the old canal which separated north and south Washington, or what was then known as the "Island," and which was a fruitful source of disease. Those of the present generation know nothing of the slimy water that was spanned by several bridges, and which separated the two sections of the city. Now it is as they see it, one continuous section of streets and avenues, and this work was accomplished by the Board of Public Works. The parking of the different streets and avenues, the laying out of the various government reservations was also a part of its work. The system of sewerage, which carries away the refuse of the city, was designed and carried out by the Board of Public Works, and everything that goes to make Washington the beautiful city that it is to-day is attributable to the plan of improvements mapped out by the Board of Public Works. In the prosecution of a work of so much magnitude, there were naturally some mistakes made and perhaps the

work was not always done as cheaply or as effectively as it might have been. There were mistakes made in the character of its pavement. At the time that the Board commenced its work wood pavement was considered to be the best for streets upon which there was not heavy drayage. It was largely laid in this District. But it was not put down by the Board until after the different processes for the treatment of the wood for pavement purposes had been examined and approved by a board consisting of Gen. Humphreys, Gen. Babcock and Gen. Meigs, who had examined the different processes then known and made a report upon their value for pavement purposes. I remember driving over the city with Gov. Shepherd after he was out of office and after the present form of government had gone into operation, and he told me that there was only one thing that he regretted in his administration of affairs here, and that was that he laid so much wood pavement. "But," said he, "I believe that I was justified in the advice of army officers who examined into the matter in accepting wood pavements. It was an experiment in other cities and we did not know that there was anything in the soil here that would rot it out. Besides, concrete, which was then just coming into use as a pavement, was not generally employed, and yet every man who came here and was responsible and who wanted to lay a concrete pavement had all the work that he could do."

The men who composed the Board of Public Works, and who were responsible for the improvements that it inaugurated are worthy to be remembered. According to the Organic Act the Governor of the District, *ex officio*, was President of the Board. He was Henry D. Cooke. He was a man of sterling integrity, had had experience in large financial operations, and was con-

sidered, when appointed, to be an excellent official. The other members of the Board, as originally appointed, were Alexander R. Shepherd, A. B. Mullett, James A. Magruder and S. P. Brown. Mr. Mullett resigned in the fall of 1872 and was succeeded by Adolph Cluss. During the investigation in 1874 Mr. Cluss was removed by the President and Dr. J. B. Blake was appointed in his place. When Governor Cooke resigned in 1873, Mr. Shepherd was made Governor, and he held that position until the change in the form of government. With the elevation of Mr. Shepherd to be Governor, Mr. Henry A. Willard was appointed a member of the Board of Public Works and was made its Vice President and executive officer. Of these gentlemen there are only three now alive—Gov. Shepherd is in Mexico, Mr. Willard and Mr. Cluss still reside in this city. With the action of the Board in October, 1871, making the Vice President the executive officer of the Board, Mr. Shepherd practically became the Board, as he had been the ruling spirit up to that time. It was his energy, his determination, his great resources, his wonderful administrative and executive capacity, that enabled the Board to accomplish what it did in the brief period of its existence. It was against him that the shafts of the opponents of the work of the Board were directed, and he mainly bore whatever odium attached to the mistakes that were made. In the charges that were presented to the Congressional investigating committee of 1874 there were allegations of favoritism on his part, and even corruption in the management of affairs. None of these charges was sustained or was admitted by the committee, and he and every member of the Board emerged from that investigation without any stain upon his personal integrity. A quarter of a century has elapsed since that

time and the District government since then has simply been carrying out the work inaugurated by the Board of Public Works. The beautiful city of Washington to-day is a monument to Gov. Shepherd and his associates. If I may be permitted to indulge in some personal reminiscences of that time I want to say that for months I was Mr. Shepherd's private secretary, and that I know the amount of labor he devoted to his work as Vice President of the Board. I was with him at his house, at his office, in the Board, at his store, at the Capitol, at the club-house at night. I examined every paper that was submitted to him for action, and I also handled nearly all of his private correspondence. I can testify from personal knowledge as to his entire freedom from connection, either directly or indirectly, with any contract given out by him while the executive officer of the Board, and know that no act of his redounded to his personal benefit. When he was made Governor of the District, I was made chief clerk of the Board of Public Works. As such I was brought into as close personal contact with Mr. Henry A. Willard as I had been with Gov. Shepherd, and I want to bear testimony to Mr. Willard's industry and ability in the difficult position in which he was placed. He carried to his work as Vice President of the Board a knowledge of the District and its needs, learned by long residence here, and intimate contact with its people. He also had unusual business sagacity and the ability for mastering details which had come to him from years of successful business career, and he devoted himself to his work with a singleness of purpose and impartiality and perfect fairness in the award of contracts that was remarkable.

I continued as chief clerk of the Board of Public Works until that body went out of existence and the

new District government became operative. I was one of the few holding prominent positions under the Board who were retained when the government by commission commenced its operations. I was sent for by Mr. Willard to come to his house one night, and there I met Major, then Lieutenant, Hoxie, who was the engineer in charge under the form of government that was established in 1874. Mr. Hoxie asked me if I would accept the chief clerkship of the Engineer office as he should form it. I told him that I would, and then he asked me to organize the force of that office. The Board of Public Works at that time consisted, if I remember rightly, of something like a dozen bureaus, the entire number of employees amounting to over five hundred, and it was my task to consolidate all those bureaus into one office, and to reduce the number of employees to eighty-four. I do not think I ever passed a fortnight so uncomfortably in my life as I did the two weeks from the time I was given my instructions until Lieutenant Hoxie took charge of his office. I knew every man under the Board, for I made out the pay-rolls myself and I knew that they all needed work, and that those who were not retained would be thrown out of employment, most of them with families dependent upon them. I can conscientiously say that in my selection of those who were to remain and constitute my force in the Engineer's office I decided solely in regard to their value as clerks and their ability in the positions in which they would be placed. But it was the hardest task I ever had to perform, and I sincerely hope that no such labor will ever be forced upon me again.

If the young men of to-day would carefully read the reports of the Board of Public Works, submitted during the period of its existence and also the report of

the investigating committee of 1874, they would have some idea of the immense task performed by the men who strove to make Washington a city worthy its name and worthy to be the Capital of this great and glorious nation.